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However, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of this House is not entitled to act unilaterally as an independent emissary representing his own personal foreign policy; he is not entitled to act like the Secretary of State in waiting. I would like to continue to believe that he is not putting domestic politics above the national interest.

Mr. Speaker, as Pat Holt, writing for the Christian Science Monitor wrote last week, quote, "One of the so far unsurmountable difficulties is that neither most Jews nor most Palestinians are willing to admit that the other side has always suffered legitimate grievances. If either group could see their dispute through the eyes of each other, the peace process would take a giant leap forward."

Instead, in my view, the Speaker's actions are likely to make that leap more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. Presidents have consistently exerted pressure on Israel as a friend and ally in the context of obtaining diplomatic solutions to complex problems. In 1973 under President Nixon, the United States threatened to reassess Israeli relations in order to secure withdrawals in the 1973 war. President Carter exercised his influence over Menachem Begin at Camp David to grant concessions on giving the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt. He also exercised his influence over Anwar Sadat to not insist on concessions beyond Camp David to the Palestinians. Both of those actions were necessary to move the process forward. President Bush took a courageous stand in 1991 to withhold support for U.S. loan guarantees to Israel until understandings on Israeli settlements were reached.

These were all tough actions taken by U.S. leaders to help a friend, and Israel is a friend, while at the same time protecting U.S. national interests. What the Speaker has done, in my view, is to make it more difficult for Israel to make tough decisions that it needs to think through and make for their own long-term interests.

That is no doubt why the column written about this episode by Thomas Friedman in *The New York Times* was headlined, "Brainless in Gaza." It is also probably why Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* wrote, quote, "Whatever the case, the Speaker is playing with fire. Netanyahu is a notoriously unpredictable fellow who vacillates between accommodating the Palestinians and rebuffing them. He has an inflated view of his standing in Congress. (The Israeli press quoted him as vowing to 'burn down Washington' if Clinton publicly blamed him for scuttling the peace process), which GINGRICH has done precious little to correct. His political allies are some of the most reactionary and fanatical elements in Israeli society, zealots who want land more than peace. They know what God intends. Others, though, are less sure. In fact, a good many Israelis think there will be no security until

Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement about land. GINGRICH has now complicated that process, encouraging Netanyahu in his intransigence and Arab radicals in their bitterness."

Mr. Speaker, I would add parenthetically, it also makes it easier for cynical Palestinian rejectionists to undercut any willingness displayed by the PLO leadership to live up to their promises.

Richard Cohen then concluded his column as follows: Quote, "If the Nobel Committee gives a booby prize for peace, this year's winner is a foregone conclusion. NEWT, take a bow."

Mr. Speaker, the world's Jews and Israelis in particular have paid a terrible price for the world's intermittent fits of insanity. Israel would not have been created without the actions of the United States 50 years ago in trying to create a place that would be a sanctuary for that insanity.

Because we helped create the State of Israel, we have a special obligation to stand by it and to assure its survival. But with that obligation comes a concurrent obligation to be frank and truthful with them and the world about what steps we believe are necessary to change the Middle East into a neighborhood that is safer for Israel's survival. For any American President to be silent in the face of Israeli indecision or miscalculation would be the ultimate failure of friendship. The President and our negotiators, who long ago have demonstrated their concern for Israel's future, have courageously recognized that.

Now, ultimately, the hard decisions that need to be made are Israeli and Palestinian decisions. The President and our negotiators have long ago demonstrated that they understand that too. Let them make those decisions in honest dialogue in partnership with the steady and knowledgeable American hands who have worked with them under Republican and Democratic administrations alike. Let them not be misled by new-to-the-scene kibitzers in Congress who, despite their bravado, do not really know the territory or the sensitivities and cross-currents and intricacies that shape it.

It may be popular for individual Members of Congress to issue pronouncements that tell our friends at home and abroad what they want to hear, but that is not what dangerous situations require. They require thoughtful, measured and judicious cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of government. That, unfortunately, has not been forthcoming from this congressional leadership on this issue. It is about time that it is.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2646, THE EDUCATION SAVINGS AND SCHOOL EXCELLENCE ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-579) on the resolution (H. Res. 471) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2646) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3097, THE TAX CODE TERMINATION ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-580) on the resolution (H. Res. 472) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3097) to terminate the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

NUCLEAR TESTS NOT A PRODUCT OF KASHMIR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern over efforts to link Kashmir to the underground nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

As my colleagues know, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests last month. The United States condemned the tests and immediately imposed economic sanctions on both countries. The United States has called for both India and Pakistan to stop further nuclear tests, not to weaponize their nuclear arsenal, sign nonproliferation treaties, and work towards easing tensions in South Asia. These are goals that I fully support.

However, there seems to be a growing movement to link Kashmir to the nuclear tests, a linkage which makes no sense, in my opinion.

Earlier this week, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated that the "recent decisions by India and Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests reflect old thinking about national greatness and old fears stemming from a boundary dispute that goes back more than 5 decades."

In the Senate, there has been talk of a resolution that would call for U.N. mediation in Kashmir through a U.N. Security Council resolution. The resolution would also ask the United

States representative at the U.N. to hold talks with both Pakistani and Indian diplomats at the U.N.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that third-party mediation with regard to Kashmir would be counterproductive. The conflict in Kashmir is 50 years old. It has plagued the 2 countries long before they developed their nuclear programs. Interference by the United Nations, the United States or any other country would not help. In fact, the 2 countries agreed to bilateral resolution of Kashmir, among other issues, through the similar accords that they signed in 1972.

The State Department has a long-standing policy that India and Pakistan must resolve the Kashmir issue directly, and I do not want this to change.

I was happy to read that the Indian Government earlier this week said that it would pursue efforts for a broad-based and sustained dialogue with Pakistan, and I would say that positive steps such as the resumption of talks between India and Pakistan can only help resolve this volatile issue. But as I have said previously, the nuclear tests were not a product of Kashmir. Instead, I would argue that the growing military and nuclear relationship between Pakistan and China pushed India to conduct these tests. Just one week after Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests, U.S. intelligence agencies boarded a Chinese ship carrying weapons materials and electronics destined for Pakistan. This ship was carrying arms materials that included special metals and electronics for the production of Chinese-designed anti-tank missiles made by Pakistan's A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories.

Mr. Speaker, China's ballistic missile relationship with Pakistan has prompted more international concern than China's missile trade with any other country. The director of the CIA stated that "The Chinese provided a tremendous variety of assistance to both Iran's and Pakistan's ballistic missile programs."

It has been reported that China has been working with Pakistan in the sales of M-11 missiles and related technology and equipment since the late 1980s. Earlier this year, Pakistan successfully tested the Ghauri missile. This missile has a range of 1,500 kilometers, and it is believed that the Chinese may have had a role in its development. The Ghauri missile can be fitted with a nuclear device.

Last week, President Clinton stated that China must play an important role in resolving tensions between India and Pakistan. He stated that China must help "forge a common strategy for moving India and Pakistan back from the nuclear arms race."

Now, I have to say that I applaud the President and the Clinton administration and my colleagues' desire to reduce tensions and bring peace to South Asia in response to the nuclear tests. However, and I stress, that asking

China to play a major role as mediator in general makes no sense, given their role in Pakistan's nuclear development. I would suggest instead that the United States needs to continue a bilateral dialogue with the Indian Government and encourage the Indian Government to move away from nuclear proliferation. We, that is the United States, we are in the best position to work with the Indian Government ourselves to achieve this goal.

ILLNESSES AFFECTING GULF WAR VETERANS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the Chamber, and I, for the benefit of those who follow, I suspect that I will be about 20 minutes. I will not be using my full hour.

I would like to talk about 2 issues. I would like to talk about the problem that our Gulf War veterans faced when they returned home, and I would also like to touch as well on the whole issue of reform, campaign finance reform, and other reforms that this chamber has sought to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I have the incredible opportunity of chairing the Subcommittee on Human Resources which oversees the Departments of HHS, Labor, Education, Veterans Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development, HUD. In my capacity as chairman, we have looked at the issue of Gulf War illnesses and have had 13 hearings in the last 3½ years. We have called in the Department of Veterans Affairs, we have called in the Department of Defense, we have called in the CIA, to try to get a handle on the problems that our Gulf War veterans have faced when they returned home. Out of the 700,000 that have returned, almost 100,000 have had some types of physical problems to deal with and have sought to have their illnesses be dealt with by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The bottom line to our investigation is that we want our troops properly diagnosed, effectively treated, and fairly compensated, and to this point, we do not feel that this has happened.

Our investigation found that a combination of exposures were most likely the cause of illnesses, and these exposures are chemical and biological warfare agents, experimental drugs and vaccines, pesticides, leaded diesel fuel, depleted uranium, oil well fires, contaminated water, and parasites as well. Sadly, our Federal Government has not listened to our veterans. Our Federal Government has had a tin ear, a very cold heart, and an extremely closed mind.

When we completed the 11 of our 13 hearings, we issued a major report and had a number of findings, 18 in total.

We determined that the VA and the Pentagon did not properly listen to sick Gulf War veterans in terms of the possible causes of their illness. We believe exposure to toxic agents in the Gulf War contributed to veterans' illnesses.

We believe there is no credible evidence that stress or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused the illnesses reported by many Gulf War veterans. Among the 18 recommendations in our report was that Congress should enact legislation establishing the presumption that veterans were exposed to hazardous materials known to have been present in the Gulf War theater.

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That the FDA should not grant a waiver of informed consent requirements allowing the Pentagon to use experimental or investigational drugs unless the President signs off and approves. These were just a few of our recommendations.

Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, our troops were ordered to take an experimental drug referred to as PB. This was a drug that was intended to ward off the degeneration of the nervous system and our troops were being required to take this drug as a prophylactic to protect them from any possible chemical or biological agents. It was used, in other words, as an experimental drug to do something it was not designed to do. Our troops did not have the option to decide whether or not to do this. They were under order. If they did not live by their order, they would be prosecuted by the military.

We have come forward now with three bills to deal with not just the use of experimental drugs but also to deal with the potential of chemical and biological warfare agent exposure, to deal with pesticides, to deal with leaded diesel fuel, to deal with depleted uranium.

Depleted uranium is the material that is used to protect our military equipment, our tanks and our armored vehicles. It is a very hard substance. It is in fact depleted uranium. It is also used as the shell, as the projectile to penetrate armored vehicles. When there is penetration of an armored vehicle, the projectile disintegrates into powder and this is depleted uranium.

Mr. Speaker, we had our soldiers who were not told about the dangers of depleted uranium. Some of them went in actual tanks that had been destroyed to witness the carnage firsthand and to take souvenirs. In fact, they exposed themselves to depleted uranium.

Their exposure to oil well fires is well documented. Contaminated water, parasites and pesticides. But they were also exposed to defensive use of chemicals.

When we had our hearing and had the Department of Defense and the VA come before us, we were told that our troops were not exposed to any offensive use of chemicals. The word "offensive" is important because at the time that the DOD and the CIA told us this,